

Chairman Dembrow,

As a Christian, grandfather of 2 children attending a private Christian school and retired Army veteran I strongly oppose SB 223. This bill is a significant threat to our religious freedom and parental choice, which is to ensure our children receive an education that celebrates our faith and instills the moral and ethical values and expectations of our Lord. It also undermines private education in Oregon by making it subject to oversight by the state which promotes a secular curriculum that is antithetical to our Christian faith, morals and ethical values.

My grandchildren's educational needs are best decided by their parents and best served by our private Christian school. Our daughter and the father of our grandchildren chose to enroll them in this faith-based, private education and we, as the grandparents, believe it is best for our grandchildren and the state should have no input, oversight or furtherance of this advancement of the nanny state.

SB 223 would essentially force private schools to register with the state or cut off student access to choir, sports, and other interscholastic programs. Our schools already prioritize student safety, but this bill goes too far. It's unfair to punish our children by excluding them from enriching extracurricular activities that are currently offered to both public and private school students. Our grandchildren's school is currently a member of OSAA, and albeit my grandchildren are too young to participate in any organized sports yet but are greatly looking forward to participating many students already do, so, the question to you is why would you entertain taking this opportunity away from our grandchildren and any other child enrolled in a private Christian school? Especially after the isolation created and mandated by the Governor due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has had far reaching negative effects on our most precious resource, our children?

Additionally, SB 223 adds expenses to private schools and early childhood programs with little (if any) benefit to the schools or students served by them. The Legislature passed a law in 2019 to protect private school students, and SB 223 is unnecessary in light of that legislation and therefore can only be for one purpose, the persecution of Christians, our churches, schools and our very faith and the attempt to force secular indoctrination on our children.

My grandchildren attend Crosshill Christian School I believe we've made it very clear why they don't attend public school. Our faith defines us, is very important to my grandchildren and we know that attending Crosshill Christian School, that their curriculum reflects our values and belief in our God so it is very important what type of school our grandchildren attend. Please don't use our students as leverage in political fights. I ask you to stand with parents and grandparents like us and vote 'NO' on SB 223. It's unnecessary and will only harm our children.